

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1 - 19 (Cancelled).

20. (Previously Presented) Apparatus at a vehicle location for validating a vehicle operator to operate selected functions of a vehicle, comprising:

an input device for entry of vehicle operator identification information;

a transceiver for transmitting said vehicle operator identification information to a remote location for validation and receiving from said remote location a reply message specifying which of said selected functions the operator is validated to operate and specifying at least one action to be taken to indicate the validation to the vehicle operator;

and means for enabling said selected functions and the at least one action specified by said reply message.

21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a headlight of said vehicle.

22. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a tail light of said vehicle.

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a vehicle interior light of said vehicle.

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the at least one action comprises sounding a horn of said vehicle.

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said selected functions comprise impairing operation of a vehicle associated with said apparatus.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said selected functions comprise impairing a fuel system of said vehicle.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

30. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 29 wherein said impairing a vehicle transmission comprises limiting the number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.

31. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said selected function are selected from a group consisting of enabling an operation of the vehicle, specifying a time during which the vehicle may be operated, enabling the vehicle to be started; enabling an ignition system of the vehicle, enabling a fuel system of the vehicle, and limiting a number of gears that may be used, during operation of the vehicle, establishing a distance over which the vehicle may be driven.

32. (Previously Presented) Apparatus at a vehicle location for validating a vehicle operator to operate selected functions of a vehicle, comprising:

an input device for entry of vehicle operator identification information;

a transceiver for transmitting a message to a remote location at which vehicle functions are selected based upon said operator identification information, and receiving from said remote location a reply message specifying which of said selected functions the operator is validated to operate and specifying at least one action to be taken to indicate the validation to the vehicle operator;

and means for enabling said selected functions and the at least one action specified by said reply message.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a headlight of said vehicle.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a tail light of said vehicle.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a vehicle interior light of said vehicle.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the at least one action comprises sounding a horn of said vehicle.

37. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein said selected functions comprise impairing operating of a vehicle associated with said apparatus.

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.

39. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said selected functions comprise impairing a fuel system of said vehicle.

41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

42. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 41 wherein said impairing a vehicle transmission comprises limiting the number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.

43. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein said selected functions are selected from a group consisting of enabling an operation of the vehicle, specifying a time during which the vehicle may be operated, enabling the vehicle to be started; enabling an ignition system of the vehicle, enabling a fuel system of the vehicle, and limiting a number of gears that may be used during operation of the vehicle, establishing a distance over which the vehicle may be driven.

44. (Previously Presented) A method for validating a vehicle operator to operate selected functions of a vehicle, comprising:

entering vehicle operator identification information into a device located at said vehicle;
transmitting said vehicle operator identification information to a remote location for validation;

receiving from said remote location a reply message specifying which of said selected functions the operator is validated to operate and specifying at least one action to be taken to indicate the validation to the vehicle operator; and

enabling said selected functions and the at least one action specified by said reply message.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises sounding a horn of said vehicle.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a headlight of said vehicle.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing a tail light of said vehicle.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the at least one action comprises flashing an interior light of said vehicle.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein said selected functions comprise impairing operation of a vehicle associated with said apparatus.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises preventing said vehicle from starting.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises disabling a vehicle ignition system.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle fuel system.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49 wherein said impairing operation of said vehicle comprises impairing a vehicle transmission.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 53 wherein said impairing operation of a vehicle transmission comprises limiting the number of gears that may be used during operation of said vehicle.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 wherein said selected functions are selected from a group consisting of enabling an operation of the vehicle, specifying a time during which the vehicle may be operated, enabling the vehicle to be started; enabling an ignition system of the vehicle, enabling a fuel system of the vehicle, and limiting a number of gears that may be used during operation of the vehicle, establishing a distance over which the vehicle may be driven.

56. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the reply message further specifies at least one message for the vehicle operator.

57. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the at least one message comprises at least one of a route of travel for the vehicle, an itinerary for the vehicle, and a personal message for the vehicle operator.

58. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the reply message further specifies at least one message for the vehicle operator.

59. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the at least one message comprises at least one of a route of travel for the vehicle, an itinerary for the vehicle, and a personal message for the vehicle operator.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the reply message further specifies at least one message for the vehicle operator.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60, wherein the at least one message comprises at least one of a route of travel for the vehicle, an itinerary for the vehicle, and a personal message for the vehicle operator.

62. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for validating, at a remote location, a vehicle operator to operate selected functions of a vehicle, comprising:

a transceiver configured to receive vehicle operator identification information and configured to transmit a reply message to the vehicle; and

a processor configured to validate the operator identification information, configured to generate the reply message specifying which of said selected functions the operator is validated to operate, and configured to generate a notification of the validation and to transmit the notification to a third party.

63. (Previously Presented) A method for validating, at a remote location, a vehicle operator to operate selected functions of a vehicle, comprising:

receiving vehicle operator identification information;

validating the operator identification information;

generating a reply message specifying which of said selected functions the operator is validated to operate;

transmitting the reply message to the vehicle; and

generating a notification of the validation for a third party.